

Message Text

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PAGE 01 PARIS 26199 01 OF 02 091128Z
ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-07 LAB-04
NSAE-00 SIL-01 BIB-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 L-03
NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /073 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8325
INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
AMCONSUL LYON
AMCONSUL MARSEILLE
AMCONSUL NICE
AMCONSUL STRASBOURG
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY MADRID
AMEMBASSY LONDON
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 26199

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, FR
SUBJECT: UNION OR DISUNION ON THE FRENCH LEFT

REF: PARIS 24412

SUMMARY. FRATERNAL INFIGHTING WITHIN THE UNITED LEFT
REACHED NEW HEIGHTS SEPTEMBER 5 WHEN THE COMMUNISTS
LAUNCHED AN APPEAL FOR SUPPORT DIRECTLY TO THE WORKING
CLASS, USING SIX MILLION COPIES OF A HUMANITE SPECIAL
ON THE COMMON PROGRAM. ALTHOUGH BETTING STILL FAVORS A
SUCCESSFUL CONCLUSION TO THE LEFT SUMMIT OF SEPTEMBER
14, THE PCF HAS LAID THE GROUNDWORK FOR A POSSIBLE
RUPTURE. THE MAJORITY PARTIES MEANWHILE AGREED ON
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PAGE 02 PARIS 26199 01 OF 02 091128Z

THEIR "MANIFESTO" OF COMMON PRINCIPLES, ADDING ANOTHER
SMALL STICK TO THEIR SMOULDERING FIRE OF OPTIMISM.
THE COMBINATION OF DISUNION AND UNION IS REFLECTED IN
THE FIGARO-SOFRES POLL OF SEPTEMBER 8 WHICH SHOWS THE
LEFT LEADING IN VOTING INTENTIONS 53-47, BUT TRAILING
ON THE QUESTION "WHO DO YOU THINK WILL WIN?" BY 36-
32. END SUMMARY.

1. "NO SECRETS FOR YOU": AFTER NEARLY FIVE WEEKS OF STEADY COMMUNIST (PCF)-SOCIALIST (PS) DEBATE OVER UP-DATING THE COMMON PROGRAM, THE PCF LAUNCHED SEPTEMBER 5 AN EVEN BIGGER AND BETTER PROPAGANDA OPERATION DESIGNED TO BRING ITS WORKING CLASS ELECTORATE INTO A BATTLE HERETOFORE RESERVED FOR POLITICIANS. IN PUBLISHING SOME SIX MILLION COPIES OF HUMANITE'S TWO-PAGE INSERT TITLED "NO SECRETS FOR YOU," THE PCF TAKES ITS CASE DIRECTLY TO THE WORKERS, URGING THEM TO JOIN THE FIGHT AGAINST A SOCIALIST ALLY ALLEGEDLY UNWILLING TO DO MORE THAN "MANAGE THE CURRENT CRISIS OF CAPITALISM" AND COMMITTED TO CONTINUED "AUSTERITY." WHEREAS LEFT POLEMICS BEGAN ON THE QUESTION OF NATIONAL DEFENSE (PARIS 23164), THE CONTROVERSY HAS NOW SETTLED ON SOME CRITICAL ECONOMIC QUESTIONS:

- MINIMUM WAGE: THE PS FAVORS 2200 F AS OF APRIL 1978; PCF WANTS 2200 F AS OF SIGNING THE NEW COMMON PROGRAM, TO BE ADJUSTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH COST OF LIVING (ABOUT 2400 F BY NEXT APRIL).
- HIERARCHY OF SALARIES: PCF PROPOSES A FIVE-YEAR GOAL OF 1 TO 5 RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN LOWEST AND HIGHEST PAID; PS ACCEPTS PRINCIPLE OF REDUCTION (TALKING 1 TO 7 ON OCCASION) BUT WOULD RATHER RETAIN MORE FLEXIBILITY

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PAGE 03 PARIS 26199 01 OF 02 091128Z

THROUGH ABSENCE OF SUCH SPECIFICITY.

- NATIONALIZATIONS: PCF WANTS 1450 (WHICH INCLUDES ALL SUBSIDIARIES AND AFFILIATES IN WHICH MAJOR GROUPS HOLD MORE THAN 50 PERCENT INTEREST); PS PREFERS TO LIMIT FIELD TO THE HOLDING COMPANIES OF THE NINE GROUPS DESIGNATED IN 1972, DIRECTLY NATIONALIZING ONLY SELECTED AFFILIATES.

2. THE REAL STAKES: ALTHOUGH THE DIFFERENCES DESCRIBED ABOVE REPRESENT SIGNIFICANT POINTS OF DIVERGENCE, THEY HARDLY WARRANT NEARLY SIX WEEKS OF OFTEN VICIOUS MUDSLING, PARTICULARLY WHEN PS LEADER MITTERRAND HAS EXPRESSED A WILLINGNESS TO NEGOTIATE ON SOME IMPORTANT POINTS (EVEN NATIONALIZATIONS WHERE SOMETHING "BETWEEN 9 AND 1450 IS POSSIBLE"). IN FACT, THE CONTROVERSY OVER THE ECONOMIC GAME PLAN MASKS REAL AND MORE BASIC POINTS OF CONTENTION, THE MOST IMPORTANT OF WHICH CENTERS ON COMMUNIST INSECURITY IN THE ROLE OF JUNIOR PARTNER. IN THAT SENSE, THE LATEST "NO SECRETS" CAMPAIGN REPRESENTS:

- FIRST AND FOREMOST A SPECTACULAR EFFORT TO REAFFIRM PARTY IDENTITY AS THE ONE AND ONLY

RELIABLE DEFENDER OF THE WORKING CLASS, A
NO-HOLDS BARRED ATTEMPT TO CONSOLIDATE THE
PCF'S ONE-THIRD SHARE OF THE WORKING CLASS
VOTE AND TO SIPHON OFF A BIT OF THE SOCIALIST

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PAGE 01 PARIS 26199 02 OF 02 091128Z
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INFO AMCONSUL BORDEAUX
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 PARIS 26199

- THIRD;
- AS WELL AS AN EFFORT ON THE PART OF THE MAR-
CHAI'S LEADERSHIP TO DEMONSTRATE ITS CONTINUED
MILITANCY AND INDEPENDENCE, PARTICULARLY IN
THE FACE OF PROGRAMMATIC AND IDEOLOGICAL
CONCESSIONS WHICH MAINTENANCE OF THE UNION
OF THE LEFT STRATEGY WILL REQUIRE;
 - AND A FINAL ATTEMPT TO EXTRACT EVERY LAST
COMPROMISE FROM ITS NONE TOO TRUSTWORTHY
SOCIALIST PARTNERS WHILE COMMITTING THE
UNITED LEFT TO AS MANY MAJOR, IRREVERSIBLE

CHANGES IN THE STRUCTURE OF FRENCH SOCIETY AS
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PAGE 02 PARIS 26199 02 OF 02 091128Z

POSSIBLE.

3. UNION OR RUPTURE?" IN MAKING PUBLIC ITS POSITIONS AND GOING DIRECTLY TO THE WORKERS, THE COMMUNISTS HAVE UNQUESTIONABLY MADE THE NEGOTIATING PROCESS MORE DIFFICULT, BUT FAR FROM IMPOSSIBLE. THEY HAVE, HOWEVER, LAID THE PERFECT GROUNDWORK FOR BREAKING THE UNION OF THE LEFT, IF THEY SO DESIRE. IN OPTING FOR RUPTURE, THE PCF COULD CONCEIVABLY SEE SEVERAL ADVANTAGES:

- RECUPERATION OF A FEW VOTES FROM THE LEFT WING OF THE PS;
- HOPES FOR FINISHING OFF MITTERRAND'S (PCF ENEMY NUMBER ONE) POLITICAL CAREER AND PERHAPS PROFITING FROM AN EVEN MORE DIVIDED SOCIALIST PARTY;
- MAINTENANCE OF IDEOLOGICAL PURITY, AVOIDING DANGERS OF BOTH SOCIAL DEMOCRATIC CONTAMINATION AS WELL AS GUILT BY ASSOCIATION IN LESS THAN SUCCESSFUL GOVERNMENT EXPERIENCES (A LA PCI).

BUT ON THE NEGATIVE SIDE OF THE LEDGER, RUPTURE WOULD STILL SEEM TO REQUIRE A PRICE OUT OF PROPORTION TO EVEN THE MOST OPTIMISTIC EXPECTATION OF GAIN. THAT PRICE WOULD INCLUDE MOST NOTABLY:

- RETREAT FROM THE MARCHAIS LINE OF SEEKING POWER THROUGH DEMOCRATIC MEANS, A LINE TO WHICH SO MUCH HAS ALREADY BEEN SACRIFICED AND WHICH HAS PAID OFF SO HANDSOMELY IN CANTONAL AND MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS;
- ABANDONMENT OF ALL THE POTENTIAL GAINS OF PARTICIPATING IN POWER, SUCH AS INCREASED RESPECTABILITY AND ACCEPTABILITY AS WELL AS AN ENLARGED PUBLIC SECTOR WHERE PCF INFLUENCE

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PAGE 03 PARIS 26199 02 OF 02 091128Z

COULD BE IMPLANTED, BOTH OF WHICH PROMISE EVEN GREATER LONG-TIME GAINS.

4. ELECTORAL IMPACT: LEFT DISUNION HAS NOT BEEN WITHOUT IMPACT ON THE ELECTORATE. A FIGARO-SOFRES POLL PUBLISHED SEPTEMBER 8, WHILE SHOWING NO CHANGE FROM FEBRUARY AND JUNE RESULTS IN VOTING INTENTIONS (LEFT 53 PERCENT, MAJORITY 47 PERCENT), DOES SHOW A MARKED

CHANGE IN WHO THE ELECTORATE THINKS WILL WIN (SOMETIMES A BETTER GAGE THAN VOTING INTENT). 36 PERCENT NOW FAVOR THE MAJORITY (VICE 27 IN JUNE) WHILE ONLY 32 PERCENT WOULD BET ON THE LEFT (VICE JUNE'S 47). LEFT INFIGHTING NO DOUBT HAS HAD CONSIDERABLE INFLUENCE ON THIS LATTER STATISTIC, AS HAS THE MAJORITY'S NEW FOUND UNITY. MOST RECENTLY, FOR EXAMPLE, ON THE SAME DAY AS THE PCF LAUNCHED ITS "NO SECRETS" BARRAGE, THE MAJORITY CONCLUDED WORK ON ITS TWELVE-PAGE "MANIFESTO". ALTHOUGH AN ANODYNE STATEMENT OF LIBERAL PRINCIPLES, IT DOES STRESS UNITY OF PURPOSE IN STARK CONTRAST TO THE LEFT'S EVER MORE OBVIOUS DISUNITY.

5. SOCIALIST RESPONSE: FROM THE SOCIALIST PERSPECTIVE, THE ISSUE IS SIMPLE. THE PS NEEDS THE PCF ELECTORALLY IN ORDER TO TAKE POWER, BUT LIKEWISE NEEDS SUPPORT FROM THE CENTER WHICH WILL BE SCARED AWAY BY THE APPEARANCE OF AN UNCONTROLLABLE COMMUNIST ALLY. THE PS IS ALSO PRAGMATICALLY COMMITTED TO ECONOMIC RATIONALITY: TO CONCEDE TOO MUCH TO THE PCF MIGHT GUARANTEE THE SURVIVAL OF LEFT UNION, BUT COULD SIMULTANEOUSLY INSURE THAT A LEFT GOVERNMENT IS SHORT-LIVED ONCE THE UNREALISTIC PROMISES COME HOME TO ROOST. THE SOCIALISTS WILL GO TO THE SUMMIT READY TO NEGOTIATE, ALTHOUGH NOT READY TO SURRENDER. WHILE RUPTURE MAY BE SUICIDAL, IT IS NO MORE SO THAN SURRENDER AND CERTAINLY MORE HONORABLE.
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